Short State of the CASE

Between the

Physicians & Surgeons,

Relating to the

Surgeons Bill, now before the Honourable House of Commons.

I. THIS is now the third time that the Surgeons have preferred A Bill of the same Nature to the Parliament, which both hitherto have rejected; As likewise they many Attempts to the same purpose, before the Right Honourable the Privy Council, as by our Historical Account (to which we refer) at large appears.

II. The Substance of what is desired in their Bill, consists chiefly in these Particulars. (1.) *That they may have liberty to give Internal Medicines in all Chyrurgical Cases.* (that is indeed in all Cases) for by pretence of Bleeding, Cupping, Blooding, applying Leeches, or the like, there is scarce a Disease or any other Disease, which they will not pretend a Chyrurgical Case. (2.) *That they may be Examined only by Physicians in all Cases whatsoever* which must plainly discovers the extent of their Design. (3.) *That the Examination, and Licensing of Surgeons to practise in the manner aforesaid, may be in themselves, as sole Judges of the sufficiency and abilities of their Members for that purpose.*

Now the Reasons they alledge for all this, are, (1.) *That they have formerly had the like Powers.* (2.) *That those Powers are of absolute necessity to them for the Kings Service.* (3.) *That the Physicians have till of late always Consulted with them in Cases where Internal Medicines were to be administred.*

To all which it is briefly reply'd, That both by Acts of Parliament, and Orders of the Privy Council, we find the Surgeons have always been forbidden to give Internal Medicines in any Chyrurgical, or other Case whatsoever; to which the Opinions of the Judges have also Concurred: So that therefore their first Reason is a manifest untruth, as is the third also. The second indeed has some seeming weight in it, since all due Care ought to be taken, that their Majesties Fleets and Armies should be supplied with Persons fit and able for that Service, and Skilful in the Administring of Internal as well as External Remedies.

To this we answer, That the College of Physicians has been always ready to License such Surgeons to practise in all Cases, even where Internal Medicines are required, as have upon Examination approved themselves fitly qualified so to do; of which there have been, and are at present many instances, as they themselves well know. But since the College of Physicians was therefore Instituted, on purpose to take care that none but very able and already well Skilled Persons should Practise Physick in *London*, or within seven Miles thereof; because the King, Queen, and Royal Family, the Nobility and chief Gentry usually reside, and Parliaments ordinarily met there: We humbly conceive it will not be thought reasonable by this Bill for the sake of the Surgeons, to permit raw and unpractising upon the Kings chief Subjects usually residing within that compass, which is never granted, even to those bred at the Universities; till by long study and experience in the Country, they have first so qualify'd themselves as to pass three solemn Examinations by the President and Censors, before they can be Licensed to the Practice of Physick within *London*, and seven Miles; so that, in fine, the only Dispute between us is, Whether the President and Censors of the College of Physicians, with whom the Law hath already intrusted the Examination and Licensing of all Practisers in Physick, or the Masters and Wardens of the Barber-Surgeons (who never had any suitable Education or Learning for it) should by a new Law be made Judges of mens sufficiency in a Profession of which they themselves are wholly Ignorant? which We humbly leave to the Judgment of this Honourable House.

And, whereas it is by them suggested, that the Physicians have always declin'd their Majesties Service in their Navies and Armies, the contrary sufficiently appears by the Annals of the College cited in our larger Historical Account, wherein we find that several Persons, such as Dr. *Hawley*, Dr. *Hamey*, Dr. *Goddard*, Dr. *Davies*, the Great Dr. *Harvey*, Sir *Alexander Frazier*, Sir *Charles Scarburgh*, and the present Learned President Dr. *Charleton*, with many others, have heretofore, and lately served the Crown both by Sea and Land; and there are now many very ready to undertake the same Employment. But on the other side, it is but too notorious, that the Surgeons of any Ability or Name in Town do generally avoid serving in their own Persons, and substitute their Apprentices or others (who were not bred in this Town, and for the most part live out of it) of little or no experience even in their own Trade, in their places; who are rather fit to try Practices upon the King's Seamen and Souldiers, than any way qualified for the Practice of Physick, or indeed of Chyrurgery it self, as the Officers both by Sea and Land do generally complain; tho these Persons have been always first approved by such as are the Surgeons usual Examiners.

So that it is apparent, that the Surgeons by this their Bill intend not the Publick good, but their own private advantage, and much to be suspected, when under the notion of giving Internal Medicines in Chyrurgical Cases, they have drawn to themselves the entire Practice of Physick, they will then be much more backward to serve at Sea and in the Armies than already they are, to the manifest prejudice of the Commonwealth.

In the last place, We humbly submit it to the Consideration of this Honourable House, what Prejudice it must needs be to both our Famous Universities, if such numbers of Surgeons, and perhaps many meer Quacks, under that name, be suffer'd to Invade one of the Learned Professions, to the great discouragement of all Students therein.